

Good Afternoon Chairman Pinsky, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for your time this afternoon. My name is Jane Miraglia, and I am the Maryland Athletic Trainers' Association Government Affairs Committee Chair. It is my honor to be here to represent the Athletic Trainers of Maryland.

Dry Needling is the use of a thin filiform needle to penetrate the skin and stimulate underlying myofascial trigger points, muscular, and connective tissues for the management of neuromusculoskeletal pain and movement impairments. It treats all of the muscle including deeper layers of muscles which hands and fingers cannot reach. Deactivation of the trigger points can bring immediate relief of symptoms, which cannot be obtained by any other treatment.

There are currently 26 other states and the District of Columbia where Athletic Trainers, who are properly trained and certified to Dry Needle, are allowed to perform this skill on their athletes. The skill of Dry Needling is one that is shared with other medical professionals such as Physical Therapists, Chiropractors, and Physicians.

This is why the MATA has reached out to these stakeholders in the months leading up to today. We have had discussions with the Maryland Department of Health, Board of Physicians, Athletic Training Advisory Committee, APTA of Maryland, the Maryland Chiropractor Association, and MedChi, the Maryland State Medical Society. Our sponsor, Senator Beidle, was present for many of these meetings where Senate Bill 711 was discussed, and no concerns were made known and none of these stakeholders presented amendments. We reached out to the Maryland Acupuncture Society asked for questions and amendments, but we did not receive anything back.

Patient safety is always paramount. As athletic trainers, we have extensive training in emergency care. In fact, acute care of injuries is one of our national standard core competencies. Immediate emergent management is one of the reasons that athletic trainers are ideal candidates to be certified in Dry Needling.

The national organizations who certify healthcare professionals in Dry Needling set the pre-requisites for the classes. Sue Falsone, a Physical Therapist and Athletic Trainer, founded one the nation's premiere Dry Needling certification programs. She published a peer-reviewed research study which compared Athletic Trainers' education preparation to the professionally-developed guidance from the Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapists. Falsone's study found that 89% of the tasks were provided through entry-level athletic training education. This is very comparable to the results from the Federation of Stated Boards of Physical Therapists which found that 86% of the knowledge requirements needed to be competent in dry needling which is acquired during the course of PT entry-level education, including knowledge related to evaluation, assessment, and plan of care development, documentation, safety, and professional responsibilities. In other words, Athletic Trainers and Physical Therapist have very similar educational backgrounds which prepare us for the advanced training required for Dry Needling certification.

National organizations such Integrative Dry Needling, Structure and Function, and the International Academy of Orthopedic Medicine offer their dry needling courses to Athletic Trainers, Physical Therapists, Chiropractors, Physicians, and Nurse Practitioners. Athletic Trainers take the exact same certification classes for Dry Needling as all other healthcare professionals who are eligible for the certification. In fact, most of the time, these medical professionals are in the same classes at the exact same time. Passing the same skills and competency tests. Performing the exact same skill. This bill, Senate Bill 711, matches the same strict requirements and language that are currently in place for Maryland Physical Therapists. We are proposing the same advanced training requirements of 80 hours of instruction and hands on experience as the other stakeholders who are able to perform the skill of Dry Needling in the state of Maryland.

Thank you for your time today. Please support Senate Bill 711.